



1 Testimony in support

2 SB 2340 – School Counselor ration and what qualifies

3 Chairman Heinert and members of the House Education committee, NDCEL  
4 comes to you today in support for SB2340.

5 During the past session the number of counselors was increased significantly  
6 increasing it to one counselor per every 300 students. This was done without a  
7 hearing before an education policy committee and was instead pushed through  
8 appropriations. This increase in staffing was unfunded and was also one that was  
9 impossible for schools to remain in compliance with as the definition of a school  
10 counselor is quite narrow, availability of school counselors is very short, and  
11 programs that graduate school counselors are few and far between. We have data  
12 to share with you regarding just how tough it is to comply. Furthermore, in  
13 administrative rules NDDPI determined that other services used to help replace  
14 the needed counselors (example: social workers, behavioral health coordinators,  
15 contracted services with organizations such as the village) are determined to not  
16 count in that requirement although they are doing the job at the school level.

17 There is a general level of frustration from the field that this position even has a  
18 ratio. Ratios of how many people are in what position in a school were all redacted  
19 from law in or around 2013. No other position in a school has such a requirement  
20 with the exception of this one position at the request of school counselors.

21 This bill clarifies this and ensures that others hired to fulfill the needed duties in a  
22 school to serve our students count toward this requirement. We value our school  
23 counselors very much. We also need to be realistic about the students we serve  
24 and our needs in schools, and our hiring reality.